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ancestors as a group. Each stone commemorates a single individual who is invoked and sacrificed to there by his descendants. The largest combined *solo laky* and *solo esay* in the village sacred place are, however, employed for sacrifices to the ancestors as a whole. 769
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ANCESTOR WORSHIP

PRAYER AND SACRIFICE

Prayer and sacrifice are inseparable in the native mind as all dealings with the ancestral spirits are conducted strictly on a basis of exchange. It is universally felt that prayer without sacrifice, or a promise to sacrifice, is useless. Moreover, the size of the sacrifice is, in general, proportional to that of the favor asked. An important request requires a large offering while a small one is enough for a small matter. 769
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Tanala sacrifices fall into two classes: those addressed to the gods and ancestral spirits as a whole and those addressed to the spirits of individuals. The former are performed by priests or family heads and are public, the whole village, lineage, or family participating. They constitute a reaffirmation of the close bond existing between the ancestors as a whole and their descendants as a whole. The latter are performed by individuals and indicate that a relation has been established between one of the dead and one of the living. Sacrifices of this sort are usually small and are not felt to be of public interest, although anyone who wishes to may attend.

SACRIFICES TO THE ANCESTORS AS A WHOLE

Sacrifices to the ancestors as a whole fall into two classes: sacrifices performed in behalf of the whole community and sacrifices performed in behalf of individuals. The former are resorted to only in time of general calamity or to insure success in some communal undertaking, such as a war party. They are relatively infrequent. The latter are performed whenever an individual feels the need of supernatural assistance. Illness is the main cause and the one mentioned first by all informants, but such sacrifices also are made for success in business enterprises, safe return from journeys, or safe return from a war expedition.

Figures.—All important sacrifices to the ancestors as a whole are performed by professional priests. Less important ones are made by heads of families. The priesthood seems to have been a direct outgrowth of the sacrificial functions of heads of families. 793
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793 According to native belief each gens has arisen through the expansion
 769 of a single family (see Social Organization) which increased to a
 618 lineage, then to a village, and finally to a series of villages. At
 first the head of the family sacrificed to the ancestors, then, as the
 related group grew larger, the office became more formal and was
 vested in the head of the family which was in most direct line of
 descent from the gens ancestor, reckoning through eldest children.
 Finally through various causes such as settlement of part of the
 group at a distance, failure of the direct line, etc., the strict succession
 was broken down.

793 Among the Menabe at the present time every village of long
 621 standing has its priest. When a new village is founded, the priest of
 618 the parent village is expected to come to it on request and make
 sacrifices there. Finally, when the new village has existed for two or
 three generations and lost its feeling of unity with the old village, or
 when the priest becomes weary of making the necessary journeys, the
 head of the ranking family in the new village asks permission from
 the original priest to assume the priestly office. This then becomes
 hereditary in his family. There seems to be no formal investiture for
 a new priest, but the office cannot be assumed without the original
 priest's permission. In the *Zafindriantrova* gens the priest of the
 parent village is called the *Tena Pitankazomanga*, those of the offshoot
 villages simply *Pitankazomanga*. The *Tena Pitankazomanga* officiates
 at sacrifices in his own village and at those performed in behalf of
 the group of villages as a whole. The *Pitankazomanga* are considered
 his deputies and ask his permission when they are to perform the
 more important sacrifices. Most of the Menabe genses seem to
 have a similar, but rather less formal organization. In general,
 the priest of the parent village has no real control over the priests
 of the younger villages and there is no central religious authority,
 even within the gens.

793 Although the priestly office remains in the family of the original
 928 priest of a village, the exact method of inheritance varies somewhat
 with the gens. Among the *Zafindriantrova* the priests are always
 men. The office passes, at the death of a priest, to his younger
 brother and thence through the whole line of brothers. At the death
 of the last it reverts to the eldest son of the original priest, his
 brothers' children being debarred even if their fathers have held
 the office. If the eldest child of the original priest is a girl, the
 office, after it has been held by her brothers in succession, reverts to
 her children.

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Among the Zafakotry, the office may be held by either men or women. The new priest is, if possible, chosen from among the children of the deceased priest, but within this group the office is elective. The main requirement is a thorough knowledge of the rituals, but primogeniture seems to be important also. Thus, although men are usually preferred to women, in a choice between an eldest sister and her brothers the sister will be chosen if all are equally skillful. In the next generation, the children of the priest previously chosen will be given first consideration. This appears to be the commonest system among the Menabe, occurring in more than half of the gentes.

Priests hold office for life but, if they become old and infirm, may delegate their duties to some one else. Such substitution is temporary and does not affect the inheritance of the office. A priest may appoint three or four different persons as substitutes on different occasions.

Priests wear no special costume or distinguishing mark even when officiating, but must possess certain objects which are inherited from their predecessors. These are renewed without ceremony when they have been used up or worn out. The most important of these is the *hazomanga*. The term means literally "blue wood," but blue, being the color of the sky, is used in a figurative sense to indicate good or holy. The Zafindriamanana call it *hazomamira* ("fragrant wood"). The *hazomanga* is a dry piece of the wood or bark of a tree having a strong aromatic odor, like camphor. This wood is thought to possess magical powers and only priests and *ombiasy* are allowed to keep pieces of it. Scrapings from it are used in all important sacrifices. Apparently it is considered a sort of incense which makes the offering more acceptable to the ancestors. The tree itself does not seem to be especially rare and is not sacred. Any one can cut it and pieces were formerly traded to the Betalao, who have similar beliefs in regard to it. Among the Zafindriamanana only *ombiasy* may own *hazomanga*, loaning them to the priests for use in the sacrifices.

The priests also keep *olafias* and *tsiviso* or *rasavaso*. The *olafias* is a species of fungus growing on dead trees. It is used in a ceremony to avoid the bad results of discarding a charm. *Tsiviso* or *rasavaso* is white earth, used to mark people in various ceremonies. Among the Zafakotry, and probably some other gentes, the priest also inherits a wooden bowl, used for serving the food cooked as a sacrifice, and a knife, used for scraping the *hazomanga*.

793 All priests are subject to certain *fady* ("prohibitions" or "rules of conduct") which usually extend to their families as well. The commonest of these seems to be a prohibition on eating pork.

791 **OMBIAHY AND THE ANCESTOR CULT.**—Native medicine-men or magicians, called *ombiahy*, have been described elsewhere (see section on *Ombiahy*) and only their activities in connection with the ancestor cult will be described here. They are practitioners of divination and magic and are sharply distinguished from the priests, who do not work with either. Throughout most of Madagascar the same person may not hold both offices and if an *ombiahy* inherits a priesthood, he must give up his magical paraphernalia and practices at once. At the same time, there is no hostility between the two groups and they are not considered rivals. The *ombiahy* are thought to be more skilled than the priests in everything pertaining to the supernatural and the priests constantly consult them as to the best means for propitiating the ancestors.

791 *Ombiahy* frequently inaugurate sacrifices, announcing that illness or calamity is due to offended ancestral spirits, or that the spirit of so-and-so has appeared to them and demanded an offering from some one of his descendants. They are always consulted as to the most propitious time and place for communal sacrifices and for individual sacrifices as well, if the sacrificer is rich enough to pay for their services. Among the Tanala they also act as stage-managers in the more important sacrifices. This results in great variation in minor details of ceremonial procedure far, although the general pattern is always the same, the *ombiahy* is expected to change some detail each time. If he fails to do this, there seems to be a feeling of disappointment and a tendency to doubt his ability. In general, only *ombiahy* belonging to the gens are allowed to manage sacrifices, for outsiders will not be familiar with the usual ritual of the group, or with the names of its ancestors. However, if a foreign *ombiahy* of great reputation is present, he may be asked to take charge. He consults with the priest and, when the time comes to say the invocation, stands beside him and repeats the invocation with him, the priest speaking in a low voice and the *ombiahy* in a loud one. Minor priests, or those who feel uncertain of their own ability, may delegate their office to the *ombiahy* of their village, who thenceforth both direct and perform all sacrifices. The arrangement is temporary and the office reverts to the priest's family at his death.

The Tanala appear to be the only tribe in which it is permissible for an *ombiahy* to sacrifice to the ancestors, except in his own behalf.

782 west and its horns are decorated with silver bracelets and chains.

778 The rest of the animal is then cut up and part of the meat is usually put to boil, while the rest is laid aside to be distributed at the close of the ceremony. Rice is cooked at the same time, in preparation for the feast which usually concludes the proceedings.

792 All the Menabe have two methods of offering the sacrifice, called
778 *sewaka* and *sewera*. Either method may be used, on the advice of the *ombiasy*, but some families normally employ one, some the other. In the Zafindramanana gens the *sewaka* ceremony is as follows:

While the sacrificial parts are being cut, a fire is kindled to the west of the altar, without ceremony. The sacrificial parts are laid on the coals or grilled on a long iron fork with three or five tines. As soon as they have been placed on the fire, the person on whose behalf the sacrifice is made and his family take up a position to the west of the fire, facing the altar. They stand and remove their hats. The priest stands in front of them, also facing the altar, with the *hankwanga* in his left hand and the sacred knife in his right. He holds the *hankwanga* pointing outward and upward and scrapes it three times, counting "One, two, three" in a loud voice. After the third stroke he calls out: "Zovahery, give us life." He then begins again and scrapes and counts up to six, calling after the sixth stroke: "Zovahery, give us life and health." *Felo* and *carua*, the native words for three and six are, by a pun, supposed to signify life and health respectively.

After scraping the *hankwanga* the priest looks upward and repeats the invocation in a high, shrill voice. That used when sacrificing for a sick person is as follows: "Listen, listen, Zovahery male, Zovahery female, Rangidana, Rantirana, the sun, Beoramarana, Rangamiana, Andrangidana, Madiravandaho, Taimangano nahananga, the moon, the sun, and stars. (Note: The sun is invoked twice, once by its ceremonial name, once by the ordinary name.) See, you others who are in the sky! Man is blood which you have made cold and to which you have given life and intelligence. You have advised: 'If there is anything which grieves you or gives you joy, come and let us know.' Well, *sewaka* is sick and the *ombiasy* has found by divination that you, Zovahery, demand an ox. Observe these sacrificial parts (names of those repeated). Eat well in our presence, then cure this sick person to the bottom."

After the invocation everyone remains perfectly quiet for about five minutes, then the priest says: "Ten, Zovahery, do not take long to eat. Mount again by the golden rope and place yourselves

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on the golden seats, from which you watch us to give us life." There is then a pause of two or three minutes to allow the gods to depart.

When the gods have gone, the priest calls out: "We call you equally, oh ancestors [calling by their life names all the ancestors he knows and also naming five or six tombs where the bodies of ancestors are or have been buried], for it is you who have brought us into the world, exalted ones. You have gone where you are changed into Zenshory. So-and-so is sick and the embassy has found by divination that you demand an ox. Observe there the sacrificial parts [names of these repeated]. Eat well in our presence and cure this sick person thoroughly. Free him of all his pains. If some one of you, oh ancestors, is sick and therefore absent, take him part of the food." The ancestors are allowed about twenty minutes to eat and then the priest dismisses them.

When the priest finishes speaking, the small boys, six to eight years old, scramble for the grilled meat and each one can eat the piece he gets. This meat is simply the scraps left by the gods and ancestors. After this the whole company feasts on the boiled meat and rice or, if no feast has been prepared, the meat of the ox is divided and all depart. The lungs are given to the priest.

In the serious ceremony of this gens the ox is killed either at the sacred place or in the village. The sacred parts are put to cook in a new earthen pot and rice is boiled in another. While it is cooking the rest of the animal is divided and those who have both parents living can cook and begin to eat their share at once. Orphans, on the other hand, can not take their share of the meat until the sacrifice has been made. When the food is cooked, a wooden bowl is partly filled with rice, with a heap of boiled meat on top. This is taken to the place of sacrifice and laid on the altar. The person in whose behalf the sacrifice is made seats himself to the west of the altar, facing it, and the priest stands behind him, also facing it. The priest scrapes the *kanemasa*, as already described, and repeats the following invocation: "Listen, listen, we call you Zenshory, Zenshory male and female, Pangidana, Bawerawana, Rantimna, the sun, Anbrangulafala, Madiovamarukho, the moon, the stars, water, earth, and the twelve mountains." He then explains the reason for the sacrifice, ending with: "Here are pieces of all the parts of the ox. Eat them and bless us." After a few minutes' silence he says: "The gods do not take long to eat. You have now eaten. Return to your place in the sky by the golden chain and sleep in the sky. From there send us blessings and give us life."

782 When the gods have gone, the priest calls the ancestors, first
 789 calling by their life names: all the ancestors of the person giving the
 793 sacrifice, then all the known ancestors of the village and gens, and
 lastly giving a general invitation to all souls between the sea and
 Anapetrana (the mountains which form the western boundary of
 the Tanala territory). He explains the reason for the sacrifice and
 asks them to eat, using the same formula as for the gods. About
 twenty minutes of silence follow, then he tells them to return to their
 place as the family is about to eat. After this everyone feasts, eating
 even the food from the altar.

762 Apparently the differences between the two invocations are not
 769 directly connected with the form of the ceremony. The form is
 varied to suit the sacrifice, on the advice of the *ombiasy*.

In most of the other Malagasy gentes the procedure for the *tanala* is practically the same as that given. The *serasa*, on the other hand, is rather more elaborate. The ox is killed at the place of sacrifice and its meat boiled in a new pot on a special fire to the west of the altar. The invocations do not begin until the offering has been arranged on the altar. Rice is boiled at the same time as the meat, but on a different fire. When both are done, the rice is ladled out with a very large wooden spoon (Fig. 23, a). Seven piles of rice are made on the altar at equal intervals, each pile containing three spoonfuls. Three piles are arranged across the back of the altar, three across its center, and one in front. A hollow is made in the top of each pile with the sacrificial knife, and this is filled with meat and broth. The three piles at the rear of the altar are for the ancestors of highest rank, the three center piles for ordinary ancestors, and the single pile for the souls of *afelo* ancestors. If the altar is small only four piles are made, three in the rear for important ancestors and one in front for all other ghosts.

767 In the *Mananjarahana* gens the procedure for the *serasa* is as
 769 follows: The sacrificer and his family stand or sit to the west of the
 773 altar with the priest standing in front. The priest scrapes the
tanampoko as described. He then makes the following invocation:
 "Listen, listen, Zarahary raho, Andriantatra, Varanohatravana,
 Andriamafala, and Madirovanankato. You are called because so-
 and-so is sick (or because he has made a vow, repeating vow and
 circumstances). Because of this we give you a sacrifice." After a
 few minutes of silence the priest says: "The Zarahary do not ask
 much time to eat. Return to your place, mounting by the chain
 of gold and the rope of silver. Return to the place in the sky where

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you live, for we are going to call the ancestors also." One priest explained the reference to the gold chain and silver rope by saying that, as the sky was high, the gods must have some means of going up and down and, since they were gods, everything belonging to them would be of precious metal. 769 782 773

After the gods have been sent back the priest calls the ancestors of the person sacrificing by name, but not the ancestors in collateral lines. He explains the reason for the sacrifice and invites them to eat. The whole company then keeps silence for about half an hour. At the end of this the priest says: "We called you because [again reciting names]. Now that you have eaten, return to your place, for we are going to eat in our turn." The relatives then eat all the rice and meat which has been cooked, including most of the sacrifice. If the *ashinay* has advised the offering of rum, a little of it is placed in a bamboo which is planted in the ground to the east of the altar. The rest is drunk. At the close of the ceremony it is customary to leave a little meat and rice on the altar, but the priest takes the meat which has lain under the sacrifice. This, with the heart of the ox and 1.25 francs in money, constitutes his pay for performing the ceremony. The *ashinay* who has directed it receives the head and right fore foot as his pay.

The *Zafakotry*, one of the subdivisions of the *Manandriana*, had a slightly different method of arranging the *avone* offering. This group originally used only upright memorial stones about as tall as a man. When the offering was ready, equal portions were put in two wooden bowls. One of these was placed on top of the stone, the other on the ground. The lower one was set on a new mat to the east of the stone. The bowl on the stone was for the gods, that on the ground for the ancestors. The *avone* rite was never performed at the sacred stones. If performed in the village, both the *avone* and *avone* were usually held indoors, either in the house of the person in whose behalf the offering was made, or in the *trano* le ("public house of the village"), if the sacrificer belonged to the same lineage as the village chief. At present they use stone tables, but continue to make the bulk of their *avone* indoors.

The invocation and general procedure was the same as for the rest of the *Manandriana*. My informant for this group, who was himself a priest, told me that he had been interested in the attributes of the gods named in the invocation and had tried to learn something about them from the other priests and from old people. No one

767 could tell him anything and he concluded that they must be members
782 of *Zombary laly's* (*Zombary* the male's) family.

773 In the *Zaladristrova* gene stems tables are employed for sacrifices at the sacred place, but all but the most important offerings are made in the dwelling of the village priest, or in that of the person responsible for the offering. The ox is killed to the east of the house and the meat and rice cooked on the regular fireplace. In the *avona* room a mat is laid on the floor in the sacred northeast corner of the house, with a covering of *Traveller's Palm* leaves. Six piles of rice and meat are made on this in two rows, as on the altar. Southwest of this leaves are laid, but no mat, and a single pile is made for the wives and strange guests.

The sacrificer scrapes the *honomanga* only three times, with the usual chanting and invocation. He then addresses the spirits as follows: "*Sambatsiana. Antsinanana firy razana. Mangaly avon. Zombary; Zombary laly, Zombary avy. Ratsifina, Antsinanantona, Madiroanankoho, Euvangiranga, Vavohatavonana, Andronkafala, Avia fahimafana. Mandroanga avy ny volonana mipetraka aminy fandraza vata.*" "Hail [or salute] to the East. In the East there are many ancestors. You are being called *Zombary male, Zombary female*, etc. Come for we wish to offer you a sacrifice. Descend by the golden cord and sit upon the bed of silver." The reason of the sacrifice is then explained and the gods invited to eat. After a short pause the ancestors are called and allowed about twenty minutes to eat, after which the gods and ancestors are sent back together. The priest who was my informant for this gene had also made inquiries as to the nature of the gods, but could learn nothing.

782 In all the genes the less important sacrifices are made by the head of the family in the sacred northeast corner of the house. Most of the genes use a small hanging altar which is almost identical with the frames used for smoking fish (Fig. 2, c). This is covered with a mat and leaves, but usually only one pile of food is made. The head of the house invokes *Zombary* and the ancestors simultaneously, repeating no individual names, and the whole procedure is rather informal. The frequency of small family sacrifices varies with the customs of the group and the piety of the individual. Many families make an offering at every meal, placing a few grains of rice on the altar or simply throwing a little of the food toward the east.

778 No rituals or eyewitness accounts of sacrifices among the Tanala
782 were obtained. Apparently there are no village sacred places.

762 If the ancestor to whom the sacrifice is made has a memorial
769 stone the sacrifice will normally be made there. The fat of the ox
may be rendered down and : poured on the stone, but the Menabe
seem to regard this as an innovation. If there is no stone, the embassy
is consulted for the most propitious place. The southern gentes of
the Menabe have, in addition to memorial stones, wooden posts
which are set up in their villages. These are called *oto laly hano*
(lit. "wooden memorial stones") or *tan*. They are erected for sacri-
fices to individual ancestors, although two or three ancestors may be
commemorated by a single post. The posts are the property of
individual families and are usually planted east of the dwelling.

[193] If an ox is sacrificed, the regular priest is employed and the ritual,
except for the invocation, is identical with that used for sacrifices
to the ancestors as a whole. In the invocation the priest calls first
on Zavalahy, then on the ancestor who is being honored, and lastly
on the other ancestors. If the offering is less than an ox, the sacri-
fice is performed by the person himself and only Zavalahy and the
special ancestor are invoked.

Sacrifices to non-ancestral spirits are of two sorts, those made in
acknowledgment of their claim to certain localities and those made
to obtain their help. If a man desires to cultivate a patch of land
on which there is a memorial stone, he must first sacrifice an ox to
the individual whom it commemorates.

Sacrifices to obtain help are based on the belief that certain souls
are possessed of more than ordinary power. An old man or woman
will frequently announce that he or she will answer prayers after
death. The promise is made repeatedly and publicly and there
appears to be a set formula, ending with the promise, "I will do this
if what the ancestors [or the embassy] have said is true." In the
promise the person specifies what shall be offered to him. One old
woman requested stuff of a special kind and an old man requested
meat and honey, vegetables of which he was especially fond. In nearly
all cases the promise is to respond to prayers for a single purpose,
so success in business, safe return from journeys, offspring, etc.

After the death of the person a memorial stone is erected to him
and anyone, related or not, may repair to it to vow and pray to him.
If the first few requests are not granted, the people conclude that
the ghost lacks power and pay no more attention to it. If, on the
other hand, the prayers are granted, a regular cult may develop, and
the worship may continue for several generations.

Although the *ombiasy wepikidy* may perform certain functions in connection with the cult of the dead, their main activities are in connection with divination, the manufacture of charms, etc. While the priests direct their activities toward placating and controlling Beings, whether Deities or ghosts, the *ombiasy wepikidy* specialize in forecasting and controlling the operations of Fate. Even when they are in close touch with spirits, they do not control their ghostly advisers, but simply act as their mouthpieces. The controls rarely demand anything for themselves. They simply know what will happen and tell the *ombiasy*. 791

Ombiasy wepikidy are divided into *ombiasy walo* and *ombiasy skaze*. The two groups perform identical functions, but derive their magical abilities from different sources.

Ombiasy walo (lit. "spirit *ombiasy*") are under the control of some individual ghost, although it seems that a few may have more than one ghostly adviser. The ghost is usually that of an ancestor, commonly one who has himself been an *ombiasy*. The spirit selects the person and notifies him that he has been chosen by a dream or vision. If the person is reluctant to accept the appointment, which is not infrequent, the ghost may desert. However, if it appears a second time and repeats the demand, the person must obey, on pain of death. Apparently the ghost visits the *ombiasy* at will and is dominating rather than dominated. At first it makes its will known through dreams, later, as the *ombiasy* becomes more accustomed to it, it will speak to him while he is awake and engaged in ordinary activities. Apparently some practitioners of this class do have auditory hallucinations and are convinced of the genuineness of the control. The spirits will often notify them in advance when their services will be required, so that they will have the medicine or the charm ready when the person comes to ask for it. They cure the sick, make charms, direct ceremonies, etc., like other *ombiasy*, but most of them do not use mechanical means of divination, relying on their controls for information. Although most of them are considered slightly inferior to the *ombiasy skaze*, exceptional ones are accorded the highest rank of all by the natives. [792]

Ombiasy skaze (lit. "wood *ombiasy*") are far more numerous than all the others put together. They do not claim spirit control and, while the others are often nervously or mentally abnormal, they are, with few exceptions, thoroughly normal and above the average in mentality. All those with whom I became personally acquainted showed an unusual degree of shrewdness and common sense and had [554]